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## ART ENTERPRISE IN EUROPE.



ENGLAND is immeasurably in advance of America in Art culture and Art patronage. Some of the finest collections in the world are by British subjects; while the Royal Academy encourages a development of taste, which is fast becoming disseminated among the masses, for the creations and reproductions of the constantly increasing army of painters. But, it would appear, the judiciously encouraged Art Unions of the country are the *chief* instruments in consummating the great work of disseminating a love for Art; since, by means of these enterprises, the *people* are reached, and works of great excellence are dispersed to subscribers in all parts of the land. Homes are thus invaded which never before knew the presence and power of a picture. And the work of a *general* diffusion of art-taste is thus initiated. That it is the Art Unions which have chiefly contributed to the present encouraging state of affairs, is apparent from an inquiry into the state of art-patronage and culture, before the Unions commenced their labors.

In 1834 two gentlemen, Messrs Glassford and Hill, taking the hint from similar enterprises in France and Flanders, introduced the Art Union to the Edinburgh public. At that time the Scottish Academy, similar in its features and purposes to the Royal Academy, London, had an existence, and every means had been resorted to to interest the people in Art, yet with most meagre success; for, not only was the Academy poorly patronised by artists as well as the public, but it was a fact that the taste for paintings was daily becoming more indifferent and unpropitious. Such a state of affairs certainly was forbidding, yet it was this fact which induced the formation of the Art Union, as the only instrumentality capable of exciting an interest in Art; thereby encouraging, not only a taste for Art among the people, but also such a patronage as would incite artists to new and nobler efforts. The success of the Edinburgh "innovators" may be inferred from the following paragraph, taken from the Secretary's Report to the Select Committee of the House of Commons, in 1845:

"A large annual fund, exclusively de-

voted to the purchase of paintings and sculpture, and to the dissemination of engravings, was speedily realized, which, in the course of nine years, amounted to not less than £36,900. During the same period 771 paintings, 40 pieces of sculpture, and about 30,000 impressions from engraved plates, were distributed among the members of the Association; and reports and circulars, containing interesting information upon subjects connected with the Fine Arts, were circulated over the country, and in England, Ireland, and the Colonies, to the extent of more than 100,000 copies."

The Report for 1855-56 says:

"The Committee have much pleasure in announcing that the annual funds are continuing steadily to increase. The amount of subscriptions last year, which was larger than that of any previous year since 1847, has been exceeded this year by £707. The sum is £4974."

The London Art Union sprang into existence from the same causes, though at a later day than the Edinburgh Union, which may be regarded as the "parent institution" in Great Britain. It has had a less continued success than the Scottish Association, but has nevertheless, wrought a great work upon the people, and may now be looked upon as the most powerful institution existing in England for the dissemination of art taste and the patronage of artists. A patronage of artists is a natural consequence of the impetus given to the interest in fine arts by the Unions. The academies, at the first stages of the Union "innovation," offered all the opposition in their feeble power, supposing that all patronage of artists by the public would cease; but that the contrary was the effect is now well certified. Good painters received more commissions and better sales by exhibition than at any previous time; and to-day is pronounced the "palmy day," in consequence of the patronage extended to almost every meritorious artist and sculptor in the kingdom—chiefly the *result* of the Art Union labors. It may be said that it is the spirit of emulation—the desire merely to ornament parlors—the gratification of a simple vanity, which induces much if not most of the commissions for good works; but, aside from those governed by such motives, the number of those who love art for its own sake is larger than at any period of English history, and is daily increasing, owing, in great part, to the multiplication of these associations for the encouragement

of a taste for the beautiful. All the leading cities of Great Britain now boast of Art Academies and Associations, sustained by a generous public opinion and a liberal patronage. It is to be hoped that this good work will continue to expand, until the great masses of the people are reached by the influences of Art. These influences are benign, for they bear with them a spiritual development—just what the English nation wants. Great in resources, great in physical energy, and powerful in mind, the British people only need the ameliorating graces of a love for the beautiful and pure to render them the most polished and noble nation in the Old World. May Art hasten to accomplish its mission in their midst.

NORTHERN FORESTS.—Bayard Taylor, in his tour to Lapland, last winter, saw many a scene, which would bear reproduction upon canvas. Here is a sketch of one:

"We traveled too fast this day for the proper enjoyment of the wonderful scenery on the road. I thought I had exhausted my admiration of these winter forests—but no: miracles will never cease. Such fountains, candelabra, Gothic pinnacles, tufts of plumes, colossal sprays of coral, and the embodiment of the fairy pencilings of frost and window panes, wrought in crystal and silver, are beyond the power of pen or pencil. It was a wilderness of beauty; we knew not where to look, nor which forms to choose, in the dazzling confusion. Silent, and all unmoved by the wind, they stood, sharp and brittle as of virgin ore—not trees of earth, but the glorified forests of All Father Odin's paradise, the celestial city of Asgaard. No living forms of vegetation are so lovely. Tropical palms, the tree-ferns of Penang, the lotus of Indian rivers, the feathery bamboo, the arrowy areca—what are they beside these marvelous growths of winter, these shining sprays of pearl, ivory and opal, gleaming in the soft, orange light of the arctic sun?"

In the Dusseldorf Collection, now owned by the COSMOPOLITAN ASSOCIATION, are several very fine Norwegian landscapes, by Leu, Gude, Sall, Auchenbach, Dahl, &c. Those by Gude and Auchenbach are particularly noted for their arctic grandeur and spirit.

... Fable is a torch borne in the hand of truth.